

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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TAGS/ PARM

SUBJ: SEABED ARMS CONTROL TREATY REVIEW CONFERENCE: OPENING
STATEMENT MADE BY U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, JUNE 21, 1977

REF: GENEVA 5063

THE FOLLOWING TRANSMITS THE OPENING STATEMENT OF THE
US REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SEABED ARMS CONTROL TREATY
REVIEW CONFERENCE, AMBASSADOR LEON SLOSS, ON JUNE 21:

BEGIN TEXT

I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE AMBASSADOR WYZNER OF POLAND
ON HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF THE REVIEW CONFERENCE. WE ARE
INDEED FORTUNATE TO HAVE SUCH AN ABLE AND EXPERIENCED DIPLOMAT
AS OUR PRESIDENT. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO CONGRATULATE MS. SEGARRA
ON HER CONFIRMATION AS SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE. IN
ADDITION, I WISH TO CONGRATULATE THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU
ON THEIR ELECTION TO OFFICE.

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MY DELEGATION IS GRATIFIED TO SEE THAT SO MANY PARTIES
TO THE SEABED TREATY ARE PARTICIPATING IN THIS REVIEW CONFERENCE.
WE ARE ALSO PLEASED TO NOTE THE PRESENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
SEVERAL SIGNATORY STATES. IN ADDITION, I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO
EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS WHO ARE OBSERVING OUR PROCEEDINGS. WE LOOK
FORWARD TO MEETING WITH ALL OTHER DELEGATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

DURING THE NEXT TWO WEEKS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES AT HAND.

OUR SPECIFIC MANDATE HERE IS, OF COURSE, TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE SEABED ARMS CONTROL TREATY DURING THE FIVE YEARS SINCE ITS ENTRY INTO FORCE, IN TERMS OF BOTH OF ITS SPECIFIC PROVISIONS AND OF ITS BROADER PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES AS SET OUT IN THE PREAMBLE. THE TREATY IS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO PROHIBIT PLACING NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION ON THE SEABED AND THE OCEAN FLOOR AND IN THE SUBSOIL THEREOF. MY GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT THE TREATY HAS OPERATED EFFECTIVELY WITH RESPECT TO THIS PRIMARY PURPOSE, AND HOPES THAT THIS REVIEW CONFERENCE WILL COME TO THE SAME CONCLUSION.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE SEABED TREATY HAS NOT ONLY ACHIEVED ITS PRIMARY PURPOSE, BUT HAS ALSO PLAYED A BROADER ROLE IN PREVENTING THE EMERGENCE OF AN ARMS RACE ON THE SEABED. THE UNITED STATES SEES NO EVIDENCE OF SUCH A RACE AT PRESENT, AND LITTLE PROSPECT FOR ONE IN THE FUTURE. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO ENSURE THAT THIS VAST AREA DOES NOT BECOME A NEW ARENA FOR A BUILDUP OF ARMAMENTS, AND THEREFORE CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT THAT THIS SUBJECT BE KEPT UNDER CAREFUL REVIEW. HOWEVER, AT THIS TIME WE DO NOT SEE ANY NEED FOR NEW MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ON FURTHER MEASURES DEALING SPECIFICALLY WITH THE SEABED, PARTICULARLY SINCE THERE IS NEW MOMENTUM ON ISSUES OF DEMONSTRABLY GREATER PRIORITY.

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WE ALSO SEE NO NEED TO AMEND THE TREATY AT THIS TIME, AND WE NOTE THAT THE AMENDMENT PROCESS OF ARTICLE VI IS DISTINCT FROM THE REVIEW PROCESS PROVIDED FOR IN ARTICLE VII. HOWEVER, MY DELEGATION IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER PROPOSALS BY OTHERS FOR STRENGTHENING THE OPERATION OF THE TREATY, AND TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE MEANS OF DEALING WITH SUCH PROPOSALS, PERHAPS IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS CONFERENCE'S FINAL DOCUMENT.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE I, PARTIES UNDERTAKE NOT TO EMPLANT OR EMPLACE ON THE SEABED ANY NUCLEAR WEAPONS OR ANY OTHER TYPES OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. THE U.S. HAS HAD NO EVIDENCE OF ANY VIOLATION OF THIS ARTICLE, AND SO FAR AS WE KNOW ITS EFFECTIVE OPERATION IS UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED.

ARTICLE III PROVIDES A DETAILED PROCEDURE FOR VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE TREATY'S PROVISIONS. WE NOTE THAT NO PARTY HAS FOUND CAUSE TO INVOKE THIS PROCEDURE, AND CONSEQUENTLY THAT ITS PRACTICAL EFFECTIVENESS REMAINS UNTRIED. WHILE IT MAY BE ARGUED THAT THIS ARTICLE COULD BE IMPROVED BY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT VERIFICATION PROCEDURES THAT HAVE BEEN NEGOTIATED IN SUBSEQUENT TREATIES, MY GOVERNMENT IS NOT CONVINCED THAT MODIFICATIONS OR ADDITIONS WOULD BE USEFUL AT THIS TIME.

ARTICLE V OBLIGATES PARTIES "TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS IN GOOD FAITH CONCERNING FURTHER MEASURES IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT FOR THE PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE ON THE SEABED.." SINCE WE SEE LITTLE PROSPECT FOR AN ARMS RACE ON THE SEABED, WE BELIEVE THAT FURTHER WORK ON MULTILATERAL ARMS CONTROL MEASURES FOCUSING EXCLUSIVELY ON THE SEABED IS NOT JUSTIFIED AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, THE UNITED STATES, ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHER PARTIES TO THIS TREATY, HAS EITHER UNDERTAKEN OR IS CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT WHICH, WHILE THEY DO NOT DIRECTLY ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF THE SEABED, NONETHELESS MAY HELP TO PREVENT AN ARMS RACE ON THE SEABED BY RESTRAINING THE DEVELOPMENT OR USE OF CERTAIN KINDS OF WEAPONS OR METHODS OF WARFARE (E.G. BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION, THE DRAFT CHEMICAL WEAPONS UNCLASSIFIED

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CONVENTION BEING DISCUSSED IN CCD, AND ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATION CONVENTION).

ARTICLE VII COVERS THE REVIEW PROCESS AND ALSO STATES THAT THE REVIEW "SHALL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ANY RELEVANT TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS".

THE UNITED STATES HAS CONDUCTED A REVIEW OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS THAT MIGHT BE RELEVANT TO THE TREATY. WE HAVE NOT IDENTIFIED ANY DEVELOPMENTS THAT WOULD, IN OUR VIEW, AFFECT EITHER THE PURPOSES OR THE SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY.

WITH RESPECT TO THE QUESTION OF "WHETHER AND WHEN AN ADDITIONAL REVIEW CONFERENCE SHALL BE CONVENED", IT IS THE VIEW OF MY GOVERNMENT THAT ANY FURTHER REVIEW CONFERENCE SHOULD BE HELD ONLY WHEN DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE THAT MAKE IT CLEARLY DESIRABLE, AS JUDGED BY A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF PARTIES. ACCORDINGLY, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO ATTEMPT TO SET AT THIS STAGE A SPECIFIC DATE FOR A FUTURE CONFERENCE. WE WOULD WELCOME THE VIEWS OF OTHERS ON THIS QUESTION.

AS WE PROCEED WITH OUR WORK WE WOULD HOPE TO SEE A FINAL DOCUMENT EMERGE AT THE END OF THE CONFERENCE WHICH REFLECTS THE SHARED VIEWS OF PARTICIPATING PARTIES WITH RESPECT TO HOW WELL EACH ARTICLE AND PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPH HAS OPERATED. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS FINAL DOCUMENT NEEDS TO BE VERY LONG, NOR DO WE EXPECT ITS DRAFTING TO PROVE CONTENTIOUS. MY DELEGATION IS PREPARED TO MAKE WHATEVER CONTRIBUTION IT CAN TO THIS EFFORT.

IN CONCLUSION, MR. CHAIRMAN, I WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE MY GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR THIS TREATY AND OUR BELIEF THAT IT HOLDS A SIGNIFICANT PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT ENDING THE ARMS RACE AND ACHIEVING DISARMAMENT. THE UNCLASSIFIED

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TREATY IS NOT, OF COURSE, A SOLUTION TO ALL OF OUR PROBLEMS,
BUT IT NONETHELESS DESERVES, IN OUR VIEW, THE WIDEST POSSIBLE
SUPPORT. WE HOPE THAT THE RESULTS OF THIS REVIEW CONFERENCE
WILL HELP ENCOURAGE STATES THAT HAVE SIGNED THE TREATY TO PROCEED
WITH ITS RATIFICATION, AND FOR OTHER STATES TO ACCEDE TO IT
AT THE EARLIEST MOMENT. END TEXT
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Message Attributes

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